

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-13 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05
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CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L ISLAMABAD 1828

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PK, US
SUBJECT: POLITICS IN PAKISTAN GET CURIUSER AND CURIUSER

REF: A) ISLAMABAD 1792 B) ISLAMABAD 1600 C) KARACHI 0867(NOTAL

1. SUMMARY: KARACHI REMAINED QUIET FEBRUARY 21 AND 22
AFTER SEVERAL DAYS OF UNREST. CHIEF MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATOR
GENERAL ZIAI HAS EXPRESSED HIS DISMAY OVER EVENTS IN THE CITY.
POLITICKING WITHIN THE PAKISTAN PEOPLE'S PARTY HAS PICKED
UP, AND THE MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATION HAS CONFINED
BENAZIR BHUTTO--THE FORMER PRIMIN'S DAUGHTER--TO KARACHI.
END SUMMARY:

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2. KARACHI REMAINED QUIET FEBRUARY 21 AND 22 AFTER SEVERAL
DAYS OF UNREST CAPPED BY SUNNI-SHIA VIOLENCE (REFTELS).
PRESS REPORTS THAT POLICE AND ARMY ARE DEPLOYED IN THE
CITY'S TROUBLED AREAS, AND CHIEF MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATOR
(CMLA) GENERAL ZIA HAS EXPRESSED HIS "SHOCK AND GRIEF" AT
THE KARACHI INCIDENTS. SENSITIVE TO THE POLITICAL
RAMIFICATIONS FOR HIS REGIME OF THE SUCCESSIVE BOUTS OF

LAWLESSNESS AND VIOLENCE IN KARACHI, ZIA HAS COMMITTED HIS REGIME TO SWIFT JUSTICE FOR THOSE FOUND RESPONSIBLE. MEANWHILE, THE LOCAL MARTIAL LAW ADMINISTRATOR, NEWLY ARRIVED LGEN. IQBAL, HAS BEGUN AN ENQUIRY INTO THE VIOLENCE AND HAS ANNOUNCED THE PAYMENT OF RS. 10,000 (\$1,000) TO EACH FAMILY THAT SUFFERED LOSS OF LIFE OR PROPERTY.

3. SPECULATION ON POLITICAL INVOLVEMENT IN THE TROUBLES CONTINUES BUT REMAINS UNSUBSTANTIATED. THE INDEPENDENT URDU DAILY NAWA-I-WAQT FEBRUARY 23 APPEALED TO THOSE WITH A CONSPIRATORIAL BENT BY CALLING FOR INVESTIGATION INTO THE "HIDDEN HAND" BEHIND THE DISTURBANCES. WHILE THE RUMOR MILL CONTINUES TO SPIN, CONGEN KARACHI DOUBTS THE INCIDENTS WERE PREPARED OR ORGANIZED BY THE PAKISTAN PEOPLE'S PARTY (PPP), ALTHOUGH AS NOTED PREVIOUSLY, THE VIOLENCE HAS POLITICAL IMPACT EVEN IF UNPLANNED OR AS YET UNEXPLOITED. THE REGIME MUST DEMONSTRATE QUICKLY ITS DETERMINATION TO KEEP ORDER--IMPARTIALLY-- TO PREVENT POLITICAL TROUBLE MAKERS FROM CONVERTING THE CURRENT SENSE OF WOE TO THEIR PURPOSES.

4. THE PPP ITSELF HAS BEEN THE SUBJECT OF RUMORS OF AN IMPENDING SPLIT, AND THERE HAS BEEN MUCH TALKING AND FROWNING BY THE PARTY LEADERSHIP--ESPECIALLY IN SIND. EARLY LAST WEEK, BEGUM BHUTTO ANNOUNCED THAT HER DAUGHTER BENAZIR WOULD TAKE OVER AS PARTY CHIEF IF ANYTHING HAPPENED TO

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THE BEGUM. THE PRESS THEN REPORTED THAT MAULANA KAUSER NIAZI, LEADER OF THE "RIGHT-WING" OF THE PPP, AND A CANDIDATE FOR PARTY LEADERSHIP SHOULD BEGUM BHUTTO FALTER, INTENDS TO FORM A "FORWARD GROUP" WITHIN THE PARTY COMPOSED OF "LIBERAL ELEMENTS." NIAZI HAS SINCE HAD DISCUSSIONS WITH BEGUM BHUTTO, AND EMISSARIES HAVE FLOWN BETWEEN THE TWO. TODAY'S PRESS CARRIES A STORY THAT LEADERS OF THE NATIONAL DEMOCRATIC PARTY (NDP), OF WHICH ALI KAHN IS A MEMBER, HAVE HELD DISCUSSIONS WITH NIAZI, SUGGESTING HE IS THINKING OF JOINING THE NDP--WHICH NIAZI VIGOROUSLY DENIES.

5. IN A SEPARATE REFLECTION OF THE REGIME'S CONCERN FOR PUBLIC ORDER IN SIND, THE MLA FEBRUARY 22 CANCELLED BENAZIR BHUTTO'S TOUR THROUGH SIND AND CONFINED HER TO KARACHI. BENAZIR'S RECENT STATEMENTS HAVE FOLLOWED THE STANDARD PPP LINE, STRESSING THE MLA'S BIAS, THE NEED FOR IMMEDIATE ELECTIONS, THE CONNIVANCE OF THE OTHER PARTIES WITH THE MLA, AND THE REPEATED ALLEGATION THAT HER FATHER WAS OUSTED BY US IMPERIALISM. ATTACKS ON THE US CONTINUE TO BE A DAILY FEATURE OF THE PRO-PPP PRESS, AND PARTY FUNCTIONARIES HAVE KEPT UP A STEADY DRUM-BEAT OF ANTI-US STATEMENTS.

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